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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 VATICAN 001694

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

DEPT. FOR EUR/WE (MENNUTI), NEA/NGA, NEA/IAI

E.O. 12958 N/A

TAGS: PREL PHUM IS WE IZ PHUM IS WE IZ VT VTPREL

SUBJECT: REINVIGORATED POPE WELCOMES END OF WAR, CONDEMNS
TERRORISM AND RELIGIOUS VIOLENCE IN EASTER MESSAGES

REF: VATICAN 1570

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SUMMARY

1. (U) A VIGOROUS POPE JOHN PAUL II PRESIDED OVER THE VATICAN'S EASTER WEEK SERVICES, USING HIS HOMILIES AND EASTER MESSAGE TO FOCUS GLOBAL ATTENTION ON THE HOLY SEE'S TOP INTERNATIONAL CONCERNS: RECONSTRUCTION IN IRAQ, PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST, CONDEMNATION OF TERRORISM AND RELIGIOUS VIOLENCE, AND THE NEED TO AVOID A CLASH OF CIVILIZATIONS. THE POPE ALSO CAUTIONED AGAINST NEGLECTING LESS PROMINENT CONFLICTS IN AFRICA, ASIA, AND LATIN AMERICA. HIS MESSAGES REINFORCE THE VATICAN'S FORWARD-LOOKING AGENDA IN THE WAKE OF THE IRAQ WAR, AND ITS DESIRE TO REFOCUS INTERNATIONAL ATTENTION ON ITS BROADER AGENDA AFTER MONTHS OF INTENSE FOCUS ON IRAQ. END SUMMARY.

REBUILDING IRAQ FOR IRAQIS

2. (U) IN HIS EASTER MESSAGE "TO THE CITY AND THE WORLD", THE POPE EVOKED CHEERS FROM THE THOUSANDS IN ST. PETER'S SQUARE WITH HIS DECLARATORY STATEMENT: "PEACE IN IRAQ." HE URGED THAT THE IRAQI PEOPLE, "WITH THE SUPPORT OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY," SHOULD BECOME "THE PROTAGONISTS OF THE COLLECTIVE REBUILDING OF THEIR COUNTRY." THE FUTURE OF IRAQ WAS ALSO AT THE CENTER OF THE GOOD FRIDAY HOMILY -- TRADITIONALLY PREACHED IN THE PRESENCE OF THE POPE BY A PAPAL HOUSEHOLD PREACHER. THIS YEAR'S PREACHER, CAPUCHIN FATHER RANIERO CANTALAMESSA, WHILE NEVER MENTIONING IRAQ OR THE UNITED STATES BY NAME, QUOTED JOHN LENNON, JEAN-PAUL
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SARTRE AND ST. AUGUSTINE, AND ASSERTED THAT "EVERY NATION HAS THE RIGHT TO GOVERN ITSELF." CANTALAMESSA STRESSED THE DIFFICULTY OF IDENTIFYING THE ENEMY "WHERE TERRORISM IS CONCERNED." HE ALSO OBSERVED THAT SOMEONE ONCE CRITICIZED ABRAHAM LINCOLN FOR BEING TOO COURTEOUS TO HIS ENEMIES AND TOLD LINCOLN THAT HIS JOB AS PRESIDENT WAS TO DESTROY THEM. LINCOLN ANSWERED, "DO I NOT DESTROY MY ENEMIES WHEN I MAKE THEM MY FRIENDS?" THE PAPAL PREACHER THEN ASKED: "WILL THAT GREAT PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES FIND SOMEONE TO TAKE UP THE TREMENDOUS CHALLENGE?"

REFOCUSING ON GLOBAL AGENDA

3. (U) THE POPE'S EASTER MESSAGE ALSO SOUGHT TO REFOCUS ATTENTION TO THE "FORGOTTEN WARS AND PROTRACTED HOSTILITIES" BRINGING SUFFERING, DEATH AND DESTRUCTION IN VARIOUS PARTS OF AFRICA, ASIA, LATIN AMERICA AND THE CAUCASUS REGION OF THE FORMER SOVIET UNION "AMID SILENCE AND NEGLECT ON THE PART OF CONSIDERABLE SECTORS OF PUBLIC OPINION." RETURNING TO ONE OF THE VATICAN'S GREATEST PREOCCUPATIONS, THE PONTIFF DECLARED THAT VIOLENCE AND BLOODSHED IN THE HOLY LAND "WITH NO SIGN OF CEASING" WERE CAUSING HIM "PROFOUND GRIEF."

4. (U) THE POPE REITERATED HIS CONSISTENT REJECTION OF TERRORISM "WHICH THREATENS THE ORDERLY DEVELOPMENT OF THE HUMAN FAMILY" AND URGED FOLLOWERS OF ALL RELIGIONS TO PROMOTE DIALOGUE AND UNDERSTANDING AND TO WORK TOGETHER FOR A "NEW ERA OF JUSTICE AND PEACE." HE ALSO PRAYED FOR
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DELIVERANCE FROM "THE PERIL OF A TRAGIC CLASH BETWEEN CULTURES AND RELIGIONS." PRAYERS WERE OFFERED FOR ALL SOLDIERS THAT "THEY WOULD NOURISH IN THE MINDS AND HEARTS THOUGHTS OF PEACE AND NOT VENGEANCE" AND THAT THEY WORK FOR "RECONSTRUCTION AND LIFE."

5. (U) THE VATICAN'S BROAD INTERNATIONAL CONCERNS ALSO

FOUND AN ECHO IN THE SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS AT THE GOOD FRIDAY STATIONS OF THE CROSS CEREMONY AT ROME'S COLISEUM. THOSE CARRYING THE CROSS IN PROCESSION AROUND THE COLISEUM INCLUDED A WOMAN FROM COLOMBIA, MEN FROM SIERRA LEONE AND LIBERIA, FRANCISCAN FRIARS FROM THE HOLY LAND, AND AN ENGAGED COUPLE AND A WOMAN AND HER DAUGHTER WHO HAD FLED IRAQ BEFORE THE WAR BEGAN. INTRODUCING THE SERVICE, THE POPE IMploRED GOD'S ATTENTION TO "THE BLOOD SHED BY THE MANY VICTIMS OF HATRED, WAR AND TERRORISM."

COMMENT

16. (SBU) THE POPE'S EASTER SERVICES ARE BROADCAST VIA

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ACTION EUR-00

INFO	LOG-00	NP-00	AID-00	AMAD-00	CIAE-00	INL-00	DODE-00
	NOTE-00	WHA-00	SRPP-00	DS-00	EB-00	FAAE-00	UTED-00
	VC-00	TEDE-00	INR-00	IO-00	LAB-01	VCE-00	NEA-00
	DCP-01	NSAE-00	DHS-00	PA-00	TEST-00	DSCC-00	PRM-00
	DRL-01	G-00	SAS-00	SWCI-00	/003W		

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R 221344Z APR 03
FM AMEMBASSY VATICAN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC
INFO EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE
MERCOSUR COLLECTIVE
ISLAMIC CONFERENCE COLLECTIVE
USINT HAVANA

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SATELLITE TO A POTENTIAL AUDIENCE ESTIMATED TO BE MORE THAN
A BILLION PEOPLE. THIS GLOBAL STAGE OFFERED THE PERFECT
OPPORTUNITY FOR THE HOLY SEE TO REINFORCE ITS GLOBAL REACH
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AND CONCERN, AND TO CALL INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC ATTENTION TO
AREAS THE VATICAN BELIEVES REQUIRE THE MOST URGENT
ATTENTION. THE ABSENCE OF DIRECT CRITICISM ABOUT THE
SITUATION IN IRAQ AND THE CLEAR EFFORT TO BROADEN GLOBAL
FOCUS BEYOND IRAQ REINFORCES THE MESSAGE CONVEYED TO U/S
BOLTON RECENTLY (REFTEL) OF A VATICAN SEEKING TO MOVE
BEYOND RECENT TENSIONS OVER IRAQ AND REINVIGORATE
COOPERATION TO ADDRESS OTHER TROUBLE SPOTS AND LONG-RANGE
PRIORITIES. THROUGHOUT THIS PHYSICALLY DEMANDING PERIOD,
THE POPE APPEARED TO BE IN GOOD PHYSICAL FORM, FREQUENTLY
RAISING HIS VOICE FOR EMPHASIS AND EXTEMPORIZING IN
RESPONSE TO ACTIONS FROM THE FAITHFUL. THE POPE'S
PARTICIPATION WAS FACILITATED THIS YEAR WITH A NEW MOBILE
PAPAL THRONE THAT CAN BE RAISED AND LOWERED ACCORDING TO
LITURGICAL REQUIREMENTS. END COMMENT.

NICHOLSON

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